

THE REHEARSAL.

1. What becomes of the *Souls of Beasts* when they *Die*.
2. Is a Matter of meer *Curiosity*. Which Justly Expos'd. As a *Diversion* to the Reader. With a Touch upon our *Poets* of the *Stage*.
3. What *Curiosity* is?
4. The *Question* concerning the *Souls of Beasts* totally *Forraign* to our *Present Subject*.
5. Dr. *Coward* holds *God* too to be *Matter* or *Body*.

WEDNESDAY, May 21. 1707.

(1.) *Rehearsal*. I Had a Question to ask you, *Country-man*, about the *Text* we were last upon, *Ecclef. iii. 3.* of the *Souls of the Beasts* that are said to go *Downward* to the *Earth*, what you think became of them, or whether they went into the *Earth*? But the *Natural Exposition* you gave of it, by the help of the *Margin* in your *Bible*, that it was only their *Thoughts* going *Downwards*, to the things of the *Earth*, has obviated all that. And that the *Ascending* upwards, or having *Thoughts* of *Heaven* and a *Future State*, was only proper to the *Spirit of Man*. Otherwise I would have known your *Opinion* concerning the *Souls of Beasts* when they *Die*.

Country-man. To what Purpose? *Master*. Our *Business* now is not what becomes of the *Souls of Beasts*; but what becomes of the *Soul of Man*, which is still *Ascending* upwards, and at last *Returns* to *God* who gave it. This is not said of the *Soul of a Beast*. But deny'd to it, by shewing this Excellency the *Soul of Man* has above it.

Rehearsal. But *Country-man*, this is a matter still of great *Curiosity*, to know what becomes of the *Souls of Beasts*; and may afford several Nice *Speculations* in *Philosophy*.

(2.) *Country-m*. For that Reason, I wash my hands of it. I tell you, *Master*, I hate that thing call'd *Curiosity*. It is good for nothing but to make *Folks Idle*. Nay it is worse than *Idleness*. He that is *Idle* looses much of his Time, but he that is *Busy* about *Nothing*, looses it *All*. He does every thing but what he should do. The one stands still, the other goes out of the way, and is still further off. And when he has gain'd his Point, as he thinks, he has caught a *Shadow*, and the *Summ total* Amounts just to --- *Nothing*! And he is harder to be *Reclaim'd* than an *Idle* body, whose Head is full of *Nothing*, and therefore not *Pre-possess'd* against any thing. But the *Curious Man* is engag'd, his *Mind* is taken up, and he has not Time to think of any thing that is *Useful*; it *Diverts* him from his *Studies*, and is *Uneasy* to him, as when you *Wake* a *Man* out of a *Slumber*. Such are the *Amusements* of *Curiosity*. Therefore I call it a *Vice*, and to be *Cur'd* by all means in every *Body*; especially in *young People*, if once it gets Possession of them, it generally runs away with them all their *Life* long. I *Whipp'd* my *Boy* once for making a *Sing-Song*. This has made that *Scandalous Tribe* of our *Rhymers*, who call themselves *Poets*, and *Disgrace* that once *Renowned Name* (Now no *Body* will take it to himself!) The *Wisdom* of the *Antients* was hid in their *Poets*, as I've heard say. But ours *Commence* without *Learning*, *Honesty*, or good *Sense*. It is a *Trade* with us, for want of *Business*. And they earn their *Bread* by the *Fulsome* *Dedication* of a *Play* or a *lew'd Poem*, to some that have less *Wit* than *Money*. Thus have I seen a *Fellow* standing in the street *scraping* upon a crack'd *Fiddle*, and getting *Pence* from those who never heard better *Musick*. And these poor *Poets*, to supply their *Necessities*, turn *Pimps* to all the *Vices* of the *Age*, which they *represent* upon the *Stage*, with a pleasing *Advantage*: And this the effect of that over *Idleness*, of *Curiosity*, in which they employ'd their *younger Years*, and render'd themselves *Un-capable* of any other *Business*. And spend the rest of their *Time* in *Complaints* that *Wit* finds no *Encouragement*!

Rehearsal. This may be some *Diversion* to the *Readers*, that they be not tyrd with our being too *Serious* so long. Tho' this is a *serious Subject* too. But of another sort, and so *Affords Variety*. But, *Country-man*, now that you are so *severe* upon *Curiosity*, you should tell

us what it is, that *Men* be not mistaken in it, and either run upon it *Unawares*, or neglect some *useful* things, under that *Notion*. Ther may be *Use* in several things you do not see. Do you think nothing *Useful* but what turns a *Penny*? Is ther not *Use* in all *Knowledge*? It is a fine thing to *Know*.

(3.) *Country-m*. I think not, unless that *Knowledge* be worth something. I know not how to make what you call *Definitions*, but I can tell you what I mean. I think then, that that *Knowledge* which will not enable me to maintain my *Family*, or which will not improve me in my *Religious* Concerns, to help me to *save* my *Soul*, is all *Useless* and *Lost* to me. For what is that good for, that is neither good for *Soul* nor *Body*?

Ther are several *Professions*, as *Lawyers*, *Physicians*, &c. And these are *Useful* to *Preserve Life*, or *Estare*. And ther is *Use* too for *States-Men* to help to *Govern* the *World*, and ther are *Studies* fit to *Qualify* *Men* for this *Employment*, as *History*, *Politicks*, &c. But if I should leave my *Ditching* and *Hedging*, and neglect my *Farm*, to *Study Politicks*, I'm sure I should be a *Goose-Cap*, and worse than *Idle*; tho' I might come to be an *Observer* in time! The *World* is troubl'd with too many of these *Politicians*. And they *Divide* and *Distract* the *People*, hinder them from their *Business*, and dispose them to be *Mutinous* and *Rebellious*, and to *Censure* the *Actions* of their *Governors*, and pass their wife *Verdict* upon every *Tranfaction of State*! This is *Curiosity* in the *People*, and has *Destroy'd* more *English-Men* than are now *Alive*. And wherever this *Itch* enters, those *People* can never be *Quiet*, but are *Prepar'd* for all *Mischief*. And were it not better they were *Idle* and *Asleep* in their *Beds*? This is the worst sort of *Idleness*. When *Men* will go out of their own *Sphere*, and be meddling with every *Bodies Business* but their own, out of a *Curiosity* to *Pry* into other *Folks* Concerns.

(4.) *Rehearsal*. Well, *Country-man*, you have made out your Point. And to return to our *Subject*, I will ask you no more what becomes of the *Souls of Beasts* when they *Die*. For it is a matter indeed of pure *Curiosity*, and Concerns not at all our *Dispute* with *Doctor Coward*. So that it wou'd be lost time to enquire any further about it; and it wou'd *Divert* us from our main purpose of *Asserting* the *Immortality* of *Human Souls*, as it is *Reveal'd* to *Us* in the *Holy Scriptures* of *God*.

(5.) *Country-m*. I'm afraid, *Master*, that these who are against any *Spirit* in *Man*, and wou'd have it only a finer *Matter*, like the *Flame* of a *Candle*, do believe no *Spirits* at all, neither *Angels*, nor *God Himself*. And know nothing beyond *Matter*, that is, *Body*.

Rehearsal. You have *Guess'd* pretty right, *Country-man*. For the *Doctor* describing what is meant by *Spirit*, says in his *Second Thoughts*, p. 195. 1st. *Edit*. The *Word SPIRIT* denotes those *Beings* which are usually term'd *IMMATERIAL*, as *God the Father*, *God the Holy Ghost*, *Angels*, nay *Spectrums* or *Apparitions*.

Country-m. Now I have him! Now I see the *Cloven-Foot*! For I have often observ'd, that they who deny *Spirits*, or any *Devil* do believe little of a *God*. He says here, that *God* is usually call'd *Im-material* which shews that he believes it not, but reckons it as a *vulgar Error*. And he makes *God* to be *Im-material*, as he does *Angels*, nay *Spectrums* and *Apparitions*, which in the same *Book* he *Ridicules*, and believes not a *Word* of them.

Rehearsal. This was an old *Notion* among the *Heathen*, that *God* was *Matter* and a *Body*, only *Thinner* than our *Gross Body*. And these things are now *Reviv'd* among *Us*!

REHEARSAL.

1. The Encouragement the *Deists* take from Dr. Coward's Book.
2. The *Arguments* of the *Deists* are all *Negative*. And the most they Propose to themselves is to Die in a *Doubt*.
3. The *Christian* has the Advantage of them, even in this *Life*.
4. It is the Pursuit of *Pleasure* makes *Deists*. And these *Pleasures* are *Torments*.
5. The *Saying* of a *Deist* at his *Death*. Their *Lamentable Condition*. *Demonstration* against them, from the *Short Method with the Deists*. And the *Current Sense* of *Mankind*.
6. A *Recit* for a *Deist*.

SATURDAY, May 24. 1707.

(1.) *Rehearsal*. **I**T is the Common Opinion of the *Deists* (too many now among Us) and which they make their *Comfort*, that the *Soul* of Man Dies with the *Body*, like the *Flame* of a *Candle* when it is put out, and that there is no *Future Account*, nor any *Rewards* or *Punishments*. Therefore they take Great *Delight* in this Book of Dr. Coward's, which makes the *Soul* to Die with the *Body*: And what he says of the *Resurrection* gives them no *Disturbance*; they Understand it only as a *Salvo* for himself, that he might not at once seem to fly in the Face of all Receiv'd *Christianity*; which they think may be better Under-Mind'd by Appearing to Write in its *Defence*, but then Betraying its *Strength*, and the whole *Foundation* of it; the method of late taken up by Many of its *Adversaries*, as I have shew'd in *Assil* and several others. But none has Argu'd this Point of the *Mortality* of the *Soul* with so much *Pains* as Dr. Coward. Which being of such *Pernicious* Consequence, and so Greedily Embrac'd, especially by our *Young Gentry*, who love their *Pleasures*, I hope *Sober* Men will not think their Time mis-spent, to Read some further we have to say, in Answer to Dr. Coward.

(2.) *Country-man*. Before you go on with him, let me say a Word to these *Deists* you have mention'd.

They pretend not to Prove any thing. But only to Answer those *Proofs* that are brought for a *Future State*, and the *Immortality* of the *Soul*. They are all upon the *Negative*. And therefore cannot be sure that they are in the *Right*. How is it possible they shou'd be sure of a *State* they never saw, nor know any thing of? Therefore all they say Amounts to no more than a *Doubt*. And they expect no other *Assurance* when they Die. So that the utmost of their *Hopes* is to Die in this *Doubt*. And what a *Dismal* Condition is it to Die in a *Doubt*, where the *Hazard* on the other side is *Eternal Misery*! It is being in *Hell*, before they go Thither! And this, as I said, is the utmost of their *Hopes*. It is for this they take so much *Pains*, and write *Books*, to bring themselves into this most *Lamentable* of all Conditions, except the *Peeling* of those *Flames* they cannot but *Fear*! And against which they Endeavour to Harden themselves. This being the *Best* of their *Case*, as Themselves put it, it is Wonderful they shou'd get any *Proselytes*! Whereas they who believe *Religion*, both *Live* and *Die*, in prospect of *Eternal Glory*: And if they are *Disappointed*, and *Annihilated* at their *Death*, they are in as Good a Condition as any of the *Deists*.

(3.) *Rehearsal*. Your Argument is Good. And I have heard a *Deist* say, he wou'd give all the *World* he cou'd Believe as the *Christians* do, tho' but for the *Pleasure* of it in this *Life* and at *Death*. And yet (is it not Wonderful!) they Labour all they can against *Conviction*, and will even Stop their Ears! And be ready to do them an Ill Turn who Endeavor to Convince them. They Contract a perfect *Aversion* to the *Clergy*, not *Personal*, for they know Few of them, and Avoid their *Conversation*; but Meerly on Account of their *Office*, because they Preach such *Doctrines*, and Press the *Terrors* of the *Lord*, to Deter Men from *Sinning*.

(4.) *Country-m*. There you have Hit the *Sore Place*. They are Men of *Pleasure*, and cannot Endure to be Disturb'd in their Pursuit of them. But Alas! How are they Mistaken? For the *Pleasures* of a *Virtuous Life* are Infinitely Greater, (even without the Prospect of *Future Rewards*) than the *Vicious Course*; as much beyond it, as *Long Life*, *Health* and *Vigor* are Preferable to *Diseases*, a *Giddy Head*, and a *Short Frantick Life*. And there is

no Appetite of *Nature* for which *Virtue* has not Provided a Full and *Honest Satisfaction*. Let any one judge whether a *Sober* or *Drunken Conversation* is most *Pleasant*? To follow the *Plough* is *Pleasanter* than *Debauchery*. For, the *Sleep* of a *Labouring Man* is *Sweet*, whether he Eat little or much; he Draweth not his *Breath short* upon his Bed, he Riseth in the *Morning*, and his *Wits* are with him. And which is most *Delightful*, the *Company* of a *Virtuous Wife*, who has the same *Interests* with your Self for Good or Bad, or of a *Ravenous Whore*, who wou'd Devour your Substance, and Prey upon your *Life*? And are these the *Pleasures* for which Men Harden themselves against their own *Happiness*, the *Hopes* of *Heaven*, or the *Fears* of *Hell*? Which they cannot shake off, tho' they may Drown it for a while, by the *Hurry* of their *Passions*, and become *Seard* at last even to Die *Hard*, as their Phrase is.

(5.) *Rehearsal*. I was told of a Man of *Quality*, a Great Patron of the *Deists*, who Storn'd to go to Church for Thirty Years before he Dy'd, or to have the Assistance of any *Clergy Man* in his *Sickness*: But when he came to Die (not many Years ago) had this *Ejaculation*, and said, If I be a *God*, a *Heaven* or a *Hell*, I am a *Miservable Creature*. But I much Doubt it.

Behold here the utmost *Hopes* and *Expectations* of a *Deist*! And in what a Condition must such a poor *Soul* Die! Consigning himself over to *Eternal Torments*, without any *Help*, if he was Mistaken in a thing of which it was Impossible he cou'd be sure! Nay, let me add further, in a *Case* wherein the *Deists* not only Confess they have no Argument on their side, as being a *Negative*; but must own likewise, That they are not able to Answer the *Proofs* on the other side, brought from plain *Sense* and *Reason*, Demonstrating Infallibly the *Truth* of the *Holy Scriptures*, which Reveal the *Future State* to Us. And that in so short a *Compals* as two *Sheets* of *Paper*; for the first Edition of the *Short Method with Deists* was no more, and tho' oft Attempted in *Design* and *Promise* too (to my Knowledge) yet has not to this Day receiv'd any Answer. So that here is *Demonstration* against them. Besides the *Current Sense* of all *Mankind* from the Beginning of the *World*, as well *Heathens* and *Mahometans*, as *Jews* and *Christians*. And against all this Weight they have nothing to Counter-Balance but a *Groundless* and *Unreasonable DOUBT*, Contracted by a *Long Habit* of *Loose* and *Disorderly Living*, in *Sensuality* and the *Pleasure* of *Brute Beasts*! Without giving themselves Time to have a *Serious Hour*, or to Think it over *Soberly* in their own *Minds*! But Fly from it, as the *Enemy* of their *Lusts* and *Passions*, and of all the *Happiness* (they think) in this *World*; but how much Mistaken in that, you have very well shew'd. And they wou'd never give themselves Leave to Try the *Experiment* of *Sober Living*, that they might see the *Difference*.

(6.) *Country-m*. I'll tell you a *Recit* I gave to one of our *Country Deists*. After talking with him what I cou'd; and he saying he wish'd he cou'd Believe all these things, but, said he, They will not Believe for me; Then, said I, I'll give you a *Recit* for that. A *Recit*! Cry'd he, what, will you give a *Plaster*? Ay, and a Good one, said I, Do but Live one half Year, as if there were *Religion*, and by that time I'll Undertake you will come to Believe it. For then you will be at *Leisure*, and your *Mind* Dispos'd to *Weigh* and *Consider Seriously* the *Grounds* and *Foundations* of the *Christian Religion*. And there is Nothing has kept you from it all this while but want of *Consideration*.